

OIL-FOR-FOOD CREDIBILITY

HON. DOUG BEREUTER

OF NEBRASKA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 20, 2004

Mr. BEREUTER. Mr. Speaker, this Member agrees with the sentiments expressed in an April 12, 2004, Lincoln Journal Star editorial entitled "Credibility at Stake in Probe of Oil-for-Food." This Member commends the article to his colleagues.

[From the Lincoln Journal Star, Apr. 12, 2004]

CREDIBILITY AT STAKE IN PROBE OF OIL-FOR-FOOD

If the United Nations is to retain credibility as an effective force in international affairs, it cannot afford a slipshod and superficial investigation into its handling of the oil-for-food program.

Rumors of corruption in the program have been floating around for years, but more specific charges have been leveled recently.

The charges are especially troubling at a time when the United Nations is being encouraged to take a larger role in the stabilization of Iraq.

The oil-for-food program, established and operated by the United Nations, was begun in 1996 to ease hardship imposed on ordinary Iraqi citizens by economic sanctions. Under its guidelines, Iraq was allowed to sell oil to buy goods that had humanitarian purposes, such as food and medicine.

Iraq sold about \$67 billion worth of oil before the program ended, according to the U.S. General Accounting Office.

The program was set up to pay for itself. The United Nations earned a 3 percent commission. Most of the money went to cover the United Nations' costs, and the remainder was to go to the weapons inspection program.

But GAO officials said recently that Saddam Hussein's government pocketed more than \$10 billion in proceeds from oil sales. About \$5.7 billion came from oil smuggled to its neighbors. Another \$4.4 billion came from illegal surcharges and kickbacks on legitimate contracts.

Several months ago, an Iraqi newspaper said it had documented proof that oil revenue was diverted to more than 200 businesses, organizations and individuals, including French and Russian politicians and Benon Sevan, the U.N. official who ran the oil-for-food program.

U.N. officials attempted and succeeded in blocking some of the smuggling ventures, but the recent charges portray the corruption as much more extensive than previously suspected. One of the ticklish aspects of the corruption charges is that U.N. General Secretary Kofi Annan's son, Kojo, worked for one of the companies that are implicated in the scandal. Suggestions that Kojo Annan was involved in the corruption seem dubious, however, since he left the company before it became involved with the program.

Kofi Annan initially was slow to respond to the new charges, but he won U.N. Security Council permission last month to establish an independent investigation into the charges. The approval was less than enthusiastic, however. Russia agreed only to "take note" of the investigation.

The United Nations has filled an invaluable role over the years in addressing humanitarian problems and helping to resolve conflicts.

In order to retain the trust of the international community, the United Nations must be willing to thoroughly investigate

these charges of corruption. If results warrant, the international organization also must take decisive action against any of its own officials who may have been involved.

COMMENDING THE ATHLETES, ORGANIZERS, VOLUNTEERS AND FANS OF THE DODGE TOUR DE GEORGIA

HON. MAC COLLINS

OF GEORGIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 20, 2004

Mr. COLLINS. Mr. Speaker, this week Georgians will line the roads to witness the top ranked stage road bicycle race in North America.

The Dodge Tour de Georgia promotes tourism, stimulates local industry, and is proud to benefit the Georgia Cancer Coalition. The race serves as a rolling festival to entertain and educate spectators across the Peach State about cycling, fitness, and most importantly about the possibility for a cure for and the prevention of cancer. This second annual event, April 20 to 25, 2004, takes pro cyclists and multitudes of visitors on a scenic 641-mile journey through the Great State of Georgia.

Athletes from over 15 countries will compete for \$100,000 in cash and prizes. With a mix of road races, an individual time trial, and challenging terrain, the 2004 Dodge Tour de Georgia will be an exciting event for both racers and spectators.

A great deal of attention will be on cycling this year, since many elite athletes vie to represent their countries in the Olympic Games in road, time trial or track disciplines of cycling in August. And, five-time Tour de France Champion Lance Armstrong seeks his record sixth consecutive win on the Champs-Elysees in July. Part of the reason for a significant increase in media and spectator interest in the Dodge Tour de Georgia this year is because Armstrong will compete in the event with his United States Postal Service Pro Cycling team. It will be the only stage race Armstrong is expected to enter in North America this year, and the only event in the U.S. for him prior to his record attempt in France.

Officials with the Dodge Tour de Georgia project a \$20 to \$30 million boost to the Georgia economy. The value provided to its charitable beneficiary, the Georgia Cancer Coalition, is expected to surpass \$2.5 million, doubling the number from 2003. The 2004 Dodge Tour de Georgia, the country's premier, professional cycling stage race, will visit 11 host cities in 6 days, from Tuesday, April 20 to Sunday, April 25.

As a world-class sporting event, the Dodge Tour de Georgia is defined in part by the 128 elite, professional cyclists who will compete in seven stage races, traversing 649 miles across Georgia in 6 days. As a vehicle to promote tourism and stimulate economic growth, the race is defined by the thousands of visitors and volunteers who plan to visit from across Georgia, the U.S. and abroad.

From just the impact of media, officials, teams, and support personnel, not including spectators, local communities will see an immediate impact from 3,000 room nights and over 7,000 meals.

I would like to commend the sponsors, organizers, and staff of the Dodge Tour de Georgia,

for bringing a world-class event of this magnitude to the people of the United States. I would also like to commend the Union Cycliste Internationale, for sanctioning this event.

I would like to recognize the host communities, Alpharetta, Athens, Carrollton, Columbus, Dalton, Dahlonega, Dawsonville, Hiwassee/Young Harris, Macon, Rome, and Thomaston; as well as their local organizing committees for their contribution to this worthy cause.

Cancer is a brutal killer that strikes without regard to age, race, sex, or station in life. I am grateful that there are organizations like the Georgia Cancer Coalition, which are dedicated to its eradication and there is support from organizations like Dodge; GE Energy; The Georgia Department of Industry, Trade, and Tourism; Georgia Power; Southern LINC; and the many others who have bonded together to organize and promote Georgia's Race to Cure Cancer.

This event brings the finest cyclists in the world to compete and raise money to fight a terrible killer so that all of the world may benefit. I am proud that this event will be held in my home state of Georgia and I commend all the athletes, organizers, volunteers and fans that make the Dodge Tour de Georgia a truly special event.

APRIL SCHOOLS OF THE MONTH
NEW YORK'S 4TH CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT**HON. CAROLYN MCCARTHY**

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 20, 2004

Mrs. MCCARTHY of New York. Mr. Speaker, it is with great pride that I congratulate the 63 elementary and middle schools from the 4th Congressional District which were recently designated as part of New York State's Most Improved Schools, and it is my honor to name them as my April Schools of the Month.

To qualify for Most Improved status, the schools have had to dramatically improve their English and Math scores. More than 50 percent of the students from the schools that made the list surpassed the English and Math standards and the number of students scoring at that level has increased by 20 points over the past 5 years, based on 4th and 8th grade test results.

The schools that made the list come from a mixture of areas from my Congressional district, proving that improving education isn't just a socioeconomic issue, but an area of concern that knows no boundaries. I am hopeful these schools will provide motivation to the rest of the schools in my district. It is common knowledge that education is the key to our children's future. We must ensure that not only the schools who made the list this year, but every one of our public schools has the funding to maintain their momentum and help all their students to meet the tougher Regents' standards.

The level of improvement by these schools is due to the hard work of the students, teachers, school staff and the parent body. Parents play a large role in the education of children by ensuring students complete their homework and improve their skills. However, I must specifically commend the teachers, who toil at a